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67. The method of claim 65, wherein, during said providing step, said first fin is attached to a first one of said two panels along said final attachment position and said second fin is at least partially unattached to a second one of said two panels along said final attachment position, said second fin and said second panel defining said fill opening.

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68. The method of claim 66, wherein said second fin is entirely unattached to said second one of said two body panels along said final attachment position.--

REMARKS

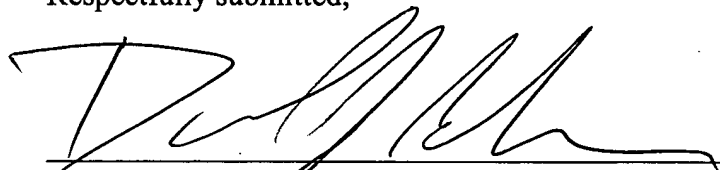
Claims 40-68 remain in the application for further prosecution. Claims 9-39 have been cancelled. Claims 1-8 were cancelled in a previous Preliminary Amendment. Claim 61 has been amended and Claims 62-68 have been added in this Third Preliminary Amendment. Submitted herewith is a clean set of claims for the Examiner's convenience.

In addition, submitted herewith is a Second Information Disclosure Statement.

The Applicants believe the claims are allowable over the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance.

If there are any matters which may be resolved or clarified through a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the number indicated.

Respectfully submitted,



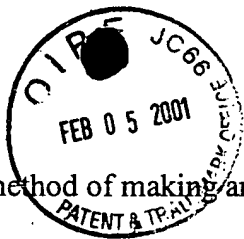
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A method of making and filling a package, comprising:

providing a package including first and second opposing body panels joined along a pair of sides and a bottom bridging the sides, the package including a fastener attached to the first body panel along a mouth portion of the package disposed opposite the bottom, the fastener including a pair of tracks joined to each other along a breakable area of weakness, the fastener initially being at least partially unattached to the second body panel while the fastener is attached to the first body panel;

filling the package with a product via a fill opening between the fastener and the second body panel; and

attaching the fastener to the second body panel to seal the fill opening.

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The method of claim 40, wherein the fastener includes first and second interlocking profiles and first and second fins extending from the respective profiles, the first and second fins being joined along the breakable area of weakness, the first fin being attached to the first body panel, the second fin being at least partially unattached to the second body panel while the fastener is attached to the first body panel.

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The method of claim 41, wherein the fill opening in the step of filling the package is between the second fin and the second body panel.

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The method of claim 42, wherein the step of attaching the fastener to the second body panel includes attaching the second fin to the second body panel.

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A method of making and filling a package, comprising:

providing a package including first and second opposing body panels joined along a pair of sides and a bottom bridging the sides;

attaching a fastener to the first body panel along a mouth portion of the package disposed opposite the bottom, the fastener including a pair of tracks joined to each other along a breakable area of weakness;

filling the package with a product via a fill opening between the fastener and the second body panel; and

attaching the fastener to the second body panel to seal the fill opening.

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The method of claim 44, wherein the fastener includes first and second interlocking profiles and first and second fins extending from the respective profiles, the fill opening in the step of filling the package being between the second fin and the second body panel, wherein the step of attaching the fastener to the first body panel includes attaching the first fin to the first body panel, and wherein the step of attaching the fastener to the second body panel includes attaching the second fin to the second body panel.

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The method of claim 45, wherein the first and second fins are joined to each other along the breakable area of weakness.

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47. An apparatus for sealing a package filled with a product, the package including a fastener arrangement along its mouth end, the apparatus comprising:

a pair of spaced, profiled guides supporting the package by the fastener arrangement; and

a sealer for sealing a portion of the fastener arrangement to the mouth end of the package, the sealer being beneath at least one of the profiled guides and alongside the portion of the fastener arrangement.

48. The apparatus of claim 47, wherein the fastener arrangement includes a fastener and a slider slidably mounted to the fastener, each of the profiled guides including an upper step supporting the package by the slider.

49. The apparatus of claim 48, wherein the fastener arrangement includes a pair of end terminations mounted to respective opposing ends of the fastener, each of the profiled guides including a lower step supporting the package by the end terminations.

50. The apparatus of claim 49, wherein the upper step of each profiled guide is located outwardly and above the respective lower step.

51. The apparatus of claim 47, further including a pair of moving members engaging opposite sides of the package and conveying the package through the profiled guides, the moving members being positioned beneath the respective guides.

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52. The apparatus of claim 51, wherein each of the moving members includes a conveyor belt.

53. The apparatus of claim 51, wherein the sealer is located proximate one of the moving members such that the one of the moving members is between the package and the sealer.

54. The apparatus of claim 52, wherein the sealer includes a heated band of metal lining an inner surface of the conveyor belt of at least one of the moving members and moving with the conveyor belt.

55. The apparatus of claim 52, wherein the sealer includes a reciprocating heated bar disposed within the conveyor belt of one of the moving members.

56. An apparatus for sealing a package filled with a product, the package including a fastener arrangement along its mouth end, the apparatus comprising:

means for supporting the package by the fastener arrangement; and

means, located beneath the supporting means, for sealing a band-like portion of the fastener arrangement to the mouth end of the package.

57. The apparatus of claim 56, wherein the fastener arrangement includes a fastener and a slider slidably mounted to the fastener, the supporting means including means for supporting the package by the slider.

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58. The apparatus of claim 56, wherein the fastener arrangement includes a fastener, a slider slidably mounted to the fastener, and a pair of end terminations at opposite ends of the fastener, the supporting means including means for supporting the package by the end terminations.

59. The apparatus of claim 56, further including means for engaging the package and moving the package through the supporting means.

60. The apparatus of claim 59, wherein the engaging means is located beneath the supporting means and proximate the sealing means.

61. A method of making and filling packages, comprising:

- providing a plastic web and a fastener in a longitudinal direction;
- folding the web to provide first and second opposing panels joined along a longitudinal bottom;
- attaching the fastener to an inner surface of the first panel near a longitudinal edge thereof opposite the longitudinal bottom;
- sealing the first and second panels to each other at spaced seals transverse to the longitudinal direction to form the packages;
- filling each package with a product via a fill opening between the fastener and the second panel; and
- attaching the fastener to an inner surface of the second panel to seal the fill opening.

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62. The method of claim 61, wherein said bottom includes a gusset.

63. A method of filling a package, comprising:

providing a package including two panels defining a mouth portion and a reclosable fastener that is useful for opening and closing said mouth portion after said package is filled, said fastener having a final attachment position on said two panels and being attached to said two panels along only a portion of said final attachment position so as to define a fill opening;

filling said package with a product through said fill opening; and

attaching said fastener to said panels along the entirety of said final attachment position.

64. The method of claim 63, wherein said package includes a bottom with a gusset.

65. The method of claim 63, wherein said fastener includes a first interlocking profile with a first fin and second interlocking profile with a second fin.

66. The method of claim 65, wherein said first and second fins are joined along a breakable area of weakness.



67. The method of claim 65, wherein, during said providing step, said first fin is attached to a first one of said two panels along said final attachment position and said second fin is at least partially unattached to a second one of said two panels along said final attachment position, said second fin and said second panel defining said fill opening.

68. The method of claim 66, wherein said second fin is entirely unattached to said second one of said two body panels along said final attachment position.

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